

**U. S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation**

**Mid-Pacific Region
Lahontan Basin Area Office
Carson City, Nevada**

**Finding of No Significant Impact
and
Environmental Assessment**

**Ditch Rider Houses Demolition and Removal
Round Two
Churchill County, Nevada**

August 2010

FONSI NO. LO-10-02

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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Ditch Rider Houses Demolition and Removal, Round 2

I. Background, Proposed Action, and Purpose and Need

The Newlands Project provides water from the Truckee and Carson Rivers for irrigation of approximately 57,000 acres in the Lahontan Valley near Fallon and Fernley in western Nevada. The ditch rider houses were built to provide housing for the operators of the irrigation facilities, and are still under Reclamation ownership. The ditch rider houses are now vacant and are no longer maintained. The associated lands are no longer necessary for project purposes.

The purpose of the proposed action is to facilitate the demolition and removal of five ditch rider houses and their associated structures, and the disposition of the associated lands. The ditch rider houses are no longer utilized or needed, and pose a human health and safety hazard. For those houses on acquired lands, the house would be demolished and removed and the land would be sold via a GSA competitively bid sale. For those houses on withdrawn lands, the house would be demolished and removed and the lands relinquished to BLM; Reclamation would retain an easement for project features.

II. Summary of Impacts

Proposed Action Alternative:

- Local wildlife may be displaced by the noise and disturbance during destruction and removal; these effects would be minimal and temporary.
- There may be temporary small increases in fugitive dust emissions from demolition and removal activities; these would be minimal and short-term. The contractor will be required to use a water truck on site to control blowing dust during demolition and removal.
- The demolition and removal of the houses would temporarily impact the vegetation immediately surrounding them over the short-term.
- There are no threatened or endangered species in the houses or within the immediate vicinity.
- There will be no impacts to Indian Trust Assets or water resources.
- Environmental Justice: Implementing the proposed action will not disproportionately affect minorities or low-income populations and communities.
- Hazardous materials: An asbestos survey is required under the Comprehensive Environmental Response Cleanup and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA).

Demolition and removal of material will be managed by the State of Nevada Office of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). After demolition and removal of the structures is complete, a Phase 1 Hazmat survey and report will be completed by a certified inspector as part of the land conveyance process to relieve the federal government of any hazmat liabilities.

- **Historic & Cultural Resources:** The demolition and removal of the five former ditchrider houses and their associated buildings will result in an adverse effect to historic properties pursuant to 36 CFR 800.5(b). Reclamation consulted with the Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) on May 27, 2010 on the determinations of eligibility and finding of effect for the five ditchrider complexes and the Newlands Project Historic District. Reclamation determined that none of the five ditchrider complexes are individually eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) but that the Newlands Project Historic District was eligible for inclusion in the National Register. The removal of a property type, the ditchrider complexes, from the eligible Newlands Project Historic District was found to be an adverse effect to historic properties. Reclamation received concurrence from the Nevada SHPO on July 9, 2010. Reclamation is continuing to consult with the Nevada SHPO under Sec. 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Reclamation is currently developing a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Nevada SHPO to resolve adverse effects prior to implementation of the proposed action.

The following Cultural Resource Commitment will apply:

No demolition or ground disturbing activities will occur at any of the locations until this MOA is signed and approved by Reclamation and the SHPO.

No Action Alternative:

There would be no effects and no change from current conditions from the No Action Alternative to any of the resources analyzed in this EA.

Cumulative impacts / Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments:

Other than cultural resources, there will be no effect on environmental or human resources from cumulative impacts with regards to the demolition of the former ditch rider houses and disposal of associated lands. There would be no irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources.

III. Comments Received on the EA

One public comment was received during the scoping period on the EA; this is shown as Attachment 1. The comments were addressed within the text of the EA and in Attachment 2.

IV. Findings

Reclamation prepared an environmental assessment on the impacts of demolishing and removing the ditch rider houses, and the disposition of the associated property. The EA documents that compliance has occurred with the Endangered Species Act, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, Indian Trust Assets, Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Environmental Justice, Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act.

The Lahontan Basin Area Office has found that the proposed action is not a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required for carrying out this action.

Following are the reasons why the impacts of the proposed action are not significant:

1. There would be short-term, temporary impacts during destruction and removal to the following resources: wildlife, air quality, and vegetation.
2. There will be no impact to Threatened or Endangered Species, Indian Trust Assets, or water resources.
3. Implementing the proposed action will not disproportionately affect minorities or low-income populations and communities.
4. Hazardous materials will be handled in accordance with federal and state regulations.
5. Historic or cultural resources: As stated above and in Attachment 3 to the EA, consultation is ongoing with the Nevada SHPO under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Reclamation is currently developing an MOA with the Nevada SHPO to resolve adverse effects prior to implementation of the proposed action. The following Cultural Resource Commitment will apply:

No demolition or ground disturbing activities will occur at any of the locations until this MOA is signed and approved by the SHPO and Reclamation.

6. There are no irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources.